

VZCZCXRO9693
PP RUEHAG RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHROV
DE RUEHLB #0972/01 1801435
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 291435Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8651
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1377
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1292
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 000972

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/MARCHESE/HARDING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/28/2017
TAGS: [IS](#) [LE](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: LEBANON: UNIFIL DISCUSSES TRIPARTITE TALKS, VBIED
ATTACK, AND JUNE 17 ROCKET ATTACK

Classified By: DCM Bill Grant. Reason: Section 1.4 (b).

SUMMARY

1. (C) On June 27, UNIFIL's Chief of Planning and Coordination described the June 24 attack on the UNIFIL patrol near the village of El Khaim as a "specific terrorist attack" directed against UNIFIL, but he refrained from saying it had deliberately targeted the forward-leaning Spanish contingent. Additionally, forensic findings have determined the VBIED was not a suicide attack as some had initially believed, but rather the device had been remotely-detonated from another vehicle in the vicinity. Based upon current threat information, UNIFIL is undecided whether this event was a "one-off" incident, or if it marks the beginning of a campaign against UNIFIL forces. Concerning the June 17 rocket attack against northern Israel, UNIFIL's investigation concluded that while four 107mm rockets were prepared for launch by a delayed-timing mechanism, only three actually fired. As reported widely, two landed near the Israeli city of Qiryat Shmona, but the impact site of the third remains unlocated. Finally, the representative discussed the tripartite meetings that are held on a near monthly basis in Naqoura. End summary.

2. (C) Col. John Molloy, UNIFIL's Chief of Planning and Coordination, briefed the International Donors Security Assistance Group on June 27 at the EU delegation offices in Beirut. Representatives from Germany, UK, Canada, Netherlands, Denmark, EU, France and Italy attended the meeting. Following a review of the status of various donor commitments to the German-led Northern Border Pilot Program, Col. Molloy briefed the group on recent UNIFIL developments.

JUNE 24 VBIED ATTACK ON UNIFIL

3. (C) Straight off, Col. Molloy relayed the assurances of UNIFIL Commander General Claudio Graziano that UNIFIL forces were not reducing their patrol activities in response to last Sunday's terrorist attack. Molloy said that UNIFIL forensic teams, with assistance from experts from Netherlands, now had a good understanding of how the attack was carried out, but have not been able to assign responsibility. The attack was deliberately executed, but because units from several national components of UNIFIL had driven through the attack site in the hours prior to the event, they could not be sure the Spanish contingent was the specific target. Two Spanish armored personnel carriers (APC) passed the site at 1735

local. The first APC drove through the kill zone without incident, but the second vehicle was directly next to the VBIED when it detonated. The blast was powerful: the 15-ton APC was tossed nearly 25 meters. Secondary explosions occurred when munitions in the vehicle cooked off, but there was no secondary IED blast. According to reliable accounts, the VBIED was parked alongside the heavily-traveled road and a second vehicle picked up the driver. Without describing the evidence, Molloy said a third vehicle detonated the VBIED using a remote control device.

14. (C) Molloy said that UNIFIL had received a higher-than-normal number of threat indicators, primarily from the ISF and LAF, in the days prior to the attack, but the general nature of the indicators did not permit any more specific reaction other than a heightened level of alert across UNIFIL's AOR. UNIFIL has not received any claim of responsibility since the attack.

JUNE 17 ROCKET ATTACK

15. (C) Col. Molloy said an LAF unit was the first to arrive at the launch site of the three 107mm rockets that were launched against northern Israel on June 17 (a fourth rocket failed to launch and was recovered by the LAF). A UNIFIL patrol reached the site shortly thereafter. The timer mechanism recovered at the site showed that the rockets were launched at 15-second intervals. Although the launch site showed no signs of being prepared in advance, the UNIFIL officer found it curious that a nearly identical rocket launch occurred from the same site in late 2005.

TRIPARTITE TALKS MATURE

BEIRUT 00000972 002 OF 002

16. (C) Col. Molloy and Timothy Reid, senior planning advisor to General Graziano, believe the tripartite talks, which have been going on since last fall at UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura, have not only developed into a valuable forum for the resolution of "blue line" issues, but have also become an important confidence-building mechanism where LAF and IDF delegations are able to informally discuss their respective positions. The meetings occur every 4-7 weeks and are usually attended by six-person IDF and LAF teams led by a Brigadier General. UNIFIL is attempting to regularize the meetings to a monthly schedule.

17. (C) Molloy and Reid described the atmosphere at the meetings as cordial, with a free exchange of information now the norm. The two primary issues presently being discussed are the final withdrawal of IDF forces from the Lebanese side of Ghajjar village and the literal demarcation of the blue line. Molloy said the agreement to finalize the withdrawal from Ghajjar is now "down to the last paragraph" and involves the demand of the LAF delegation to set a firm timetable for implementation of the agreement. UNIFIL Commander Graziano has personally met with senior GOL and GOI officials and a final agreement is expected at the next tripartite meeting scheduled for July 9.

18. (C) UNIFIL has placed a high priority on getting the respective parties to agree to a process to physically delineate the blue line, primarily to put an end to repeated misunderstandings between the LAF and IDF over perceived boundary violations. Reid said they realize the political sensitivities involved because any actual demarcation of the currently unmarked line may impact a final boundary determination between the two countries. Tripartite discussions have reached the point where a technical sub-committee will soon be established to agree on technical procedures for the actual marking of the blue line, as well as how to arrive at geographic coordinates for the markers.

19. (C) Reportedly, UNIFIL Commander Graziano considers the tripartite meetings as one of the most effective means for the opposing LAF and IDF forces to discuss issues and minimize errors. Graziano has directed his staff to keep the meetings near the top of UNIFIL's agenda and to be alert for opportunities to increase their impact and effectiveness.
FELTMAN